The History and Development of Mathematics Examinations in New South Wales at the end of Secondary Schooling between 1788 and 2010

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Certificate of Authorship/Originality

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Stephen A Curtis

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents Elizabeth and Emery Curtis.
They believed that education and knowledge can never be
taken from anyone and made enormous sacrifices
so their children would have every
opportunity to study.

Table of Contents

Tables

Figures

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Chapter 5

Higher level - Senior Public and Matriculation Honours

Arithmetic

ABSTRACT

The History and Development of Mathematics Examinations in New South Wales at the end of Secondary Schooling between 1788 and 2010.

This doctoral dissertation reviews the historical developments of education and mathematics examinations used in New South Wales at the end of secondary schooling from 1788 to 2010. A heuristic investigative process, using a manual application of quantitative content analysis was carried out. Time was used as an independent variable with an application of middle range theory to underpin the theoretical framework for this research.

The hypothesis is that over an extended period of time, it would be reasonable to expect changes to the examination process due to the influence of factors such as historical and political events, curriculum developments, and changes in social values.

The results indicate there was just one significant change identified in the early 1960s. Contrary to expectations, an analysis of the taxonomy of terms has shown that the majority of the questions were skills based and did not test logical thinking and reasoning. Apart from gender and racial equality, the style and the type of questions have not taken into account any other social changes.

In view of the above the concluding chapter will suggest ways forward for educational research.